

Religious Education Handbook

□ 2017-2018 □

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Community

Location: St. John the Baptist Church & School

Grades 1 - 12



Staff

Fr. Tom Coyle, Pastor-St. Francis of Assisi Community 674-2025

Mrs. Tiffany Topel, 674-5433/ttopel@stjohnbaptist.net
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Mrs. Jodi El-Beri, 674-5433/jelberi@stjohbaptist.net
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Mrs. Sue Terry Tinkle, 674-5821/ttinkle@stjohnbaptist.net
Principal-St. John the Baptist Catholic School



Class times for groups meeting at St. John the Baptist:

Grades 1 through 5 5:45-7 p.m., Wednesdays

EDGE Grades 6-8 7-8:30 p.m., Wednesdays

High School Ministry Grades 9+ 7-8:30 p.m., Wednesdays

St. John the Baptist RE Mission Statement

The mission of St. John the Baptist religious education program is *that all "would hear a loving and gentle invitation to meet Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, in a life changing way" through fostering spiritual growth, drawing families to responsible participation in the parish community, and empowerment to become formed disciples.*

In order to support this mission, we promise to:

***Catechize** young people and adults toward maturity in the Catholic faith through a curriculum that emphasizes understanding, reflection, and transformation and equips parents as the primary educators with the knowledge to continue that teaching at home.

***Communicate** through our webpage, e-mail, newsletter, phone call, and mailing as needed. We ask that you communicate your concerns and questions with the religious education staff and respond to such correspondences in a timely fashion.

***Evangelize** through word and witness the Good News of the Gospel to young people and adults by inviting them into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and encourage ongoing witness of the faith community.

***Guide (Justice & Service in the community life)** young people and adults in the development of a social consciousness and a commitment to a life of justice and service grounded in their faith in Jesus Christ, in the scriptures, and in Catholic social teaching; create meaningful relationships between youth and adults characterized by Gospel values; help young people feel like a valued part of the church community and provide opportunities for social interaction and meaningful participation in the life of the church and civic community.

***Involve (Liturgy & Sacraments)** adults, young people and their families in the sacramental life of the Church by assisting them with a variety of communal prayer and worship opportunities for spiritual development and a personal prayer life to celebrate their relationship with Jesus in a caring Catholic community.

***Empower (Leadership)** leadership by recruiting, training, and supporting youth, adult leaders, and catechists; develop a leadership team (Religious Education Council) of youth, adults, and pastoral staff to organize and support parish ministry and partner with families in promoting positive youth development and faith growth.

***Care (Pastoral Care & Guidance)** for parishioners in need through support, counseling, and referral to appropriate community agencies; provide guidance as youth and adults face life decisions and make moral choices and promote positive youth and family development through a variety of strategies.

St. John the Baptist Standards/Curriculum

Catechetical standards and benchmarks identify the expectations for the formation of Catholic youth and include specific grade level competencies that every youth should know and be able to demonstrate. They are intended to strengthen the partnership between the primary educators of children—the parents—and the supporting educators of children—Catholic parish and school personnel. These standards and benchmarks, as promulgated by the Diocese of Madison, will assist parents and catechists to work together toward these learning competencies and the creative developing of different curriculum to ensure successful catechesis and thus, most naturally, a deeper *communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ* the Savior of the World.

Grades 1-10 “Valuing God’s Gifts in Ourselves and Others”

During the first week of November, as requested by Bishop Morlino, grades 1-10 will participate in the *Valuing God’s Gifts in Ourselves and Others* lesson. This curriculum was developed by the Diocese of Madison in order to “provide education and training” about “ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children.” More information about the lesson will be sent home the week prior.

ACRE Assessment

Bishop Morlino has requested that all parish catechetical programs join our Catholic schools in annually administering the ACRE assessment to all 5th grade, 8th grade and students in their high school Confirmation year.

ACRE will be administered to 5th, 8th, and confirmation grade levels in both Diocesan schools and religious education programs. There were two purposes to the administration of this survey: to provide students and their parents with an understanding of the student's faith development and to provide the schools with group data. Each school will use the group to ascertain strengths and weaknesses in their religion curriculum. In addition, the Office of Catholic Schools will analyze the group data from all schools as part of a needs assessment for curriculum development. The goal is to improve the religious education and the religious experience of each student.

Grades 1-5: Faith & Life Series (www.ignatius.com)

Grade 1: Our Heavenly Father

Introduction to the Holy Trinity through presentations on God the Father, the life of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, God's plan of salvation and our part in that plan. Acquaints children with Mary, angels, and the saints. Children learn basic prayers.

Grade 2: Jesus Our Life

Preparation for the first reception of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion, with the law of God and salvation history as background. The lesson emphasizes God's mercy and love. Covers Creation, the Covenant with Moses, the Ten Commandments, Redemption, Forgiveness of Sins, and the Mass.

Grade 3: Our Life with Jesus

God's plan of salvation, from creation to the Incarnation and Redemption to the birth of the Church at Pentecost and our life in the Church. Special emphasis on the importance of Confession, Communion and the Mass.

Grade 4: Jesus Our Guide

God's plan to save his people from sin (Salvation History), how we participate in that plan, and the many ways God helps us in our pilgrimage on earth to Heaven through his word, his law, and his Church.

Grade 5: Credo: I Believe

A thorough study of the articles of the Creed as the basic belief of our Catholic faith, with a special emphasis on careful understanding of definitions through the words of the Gospels, and the prophets, and the prayers of the Church.

Grades 6-8: Edge (www.edgeyouthministry.com)

The Edge is designed to meet the spiritual, social and educational needs of each young person. Our activities range from skits and games to small group work and prayer experiences. We strive to give our young people opportunities to learn about their faith, ask questions, talk about their relationship with God, and grow in community together as young Catholics.

Grades 9-12: High School Ministry

High School Ministry, like EDGE, is designed to meet the spiritual, social and educational needs of each young person. Teens grow as a faith community in small groups, increasing in understanding of what it means to be a young Catholic in today's world. Through Eucharistic-centered spirituality, teens learn more about their Catholic faith and grow to love the Sacraments using programs such as Lifeteen, Alpha, and yDisciple to facilitate such experiences.

St. John the Baptist Religious Education Policies

Safe Arrival Policy and Procedures

1. Parents may bring their children to the lower rear entrance of school ONLY, near the gym/kitchen, at the following times. Other entrances are secured and off limits for safety purposes. Elementary students should be picked up at the front entrance of church.
 - a. Adult supervision will be present starting at 5:40pm for grades 1-5. Students should gather in the church until their catechist arrives for class.
 - b. Students in grades 9-12 may gather in the school gym starting at 6:30 pm.
2. If the religious education program is not notified in advance of an absence, out of concern for the child, parents of grades 6-12 will be notified as soon as possible after attendance is taken.
 - a. Parents should call 674-5433 (press 5 for Tiffany, press 4 for Jodi) at least 30 minutes prior to the start of class to report an absence.

Parish Affiliation

Mass attendance is expected of all our families. "Before all others, parents are bound by the obligation of forming their children by word and example in the Faith and practice of Christian life." (Canon Law 774.2) As parents you are the primary educators of your children, therefore the religious education program and its staff will do everything possible to support you in your vocation.

Volunteer Involvement

In an effort to establish safe environments for children and young adults within our parishes, schools, and diocesan programs, the Diocese of Madison has selected the educational and awareness program, "Protecting God's Children". All volunteers who will be working with, or in contact with, the children and young adults in the St. Francis of Assisi religious education program (grades pre-k through grades 12) are required to attend a "Protecting God's Children" training session. Listings of upcoming sessions can be found online at www.virtus.org. In addition, any volunteer who will be working with, or transporting groups of, children and young adults in these programs must submit to a background check. Refusal to meet these requirements results in voluntary forfeiture of the right to be involved in religious education programs.

Discipline

Any student who is consistently uncooperative or disruptive during Religious Education sessions will be removed from the class to do individual work. The second time this occurs in the semester, parents or guardians will be notified. If needed, a meeting will take place to discuss further involvement (i.e. change behavior, teach at home, parent attend class with the student, etc.) If the discipline problem is not resolved, the student will be removed from the program for the year.

Attendance

Regular attendance is expected of all students. Parents are asked to call the religious education office (674-5433) at least 1/2 hour before class if a student will be absent or tardy. If a student is not present at class, and has not been previously excused, parents will be called to determine whether or not they know of the absence. If a student does not complete 25 hours of any given years' class hours, they will be required to do make-up work in order to move to the next grade level.

Cell phones

Students may use cell phones before and after class time only. Parents who need to contact students during class time are directed to phone the school office and we will assist in communicating with you and your child. Students who need to contact their parent during class time are directed to come to school office to use the office phone for contacting parents. If a student violates this policy (including text messaging), the cell phone will be held in the Religious Education Office and will be returned only to the parent/guardian of the student.

Media and Social Networking Policy

Junior high and high school youth ministries, social networking websites and tools, especially Facebook, instagram, and text messaging, are used to communicate effectively with students. Ultimately, guardians are responsible for all internet/phone activities of their children. Please contact the Youth Ministry office if you have concerns.

Guests/Visitors

All visitors who attend class with registered religious education students must check in with the Director of Religious Education or the assistant in the office before class begins. Those who visit on a regular basis will need to register with parental permission for religious education class/youth ministry programs.

Adult Continuing Education

Our parish has purchased a FREE gift subscription for every member of our parish. We encourage our families to access the content on FORMED.org to grow in their faith! (CODE: GMP 642).



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Sacramental Preparation

St. John the Baptist Guidelines for Reception of 1st Reconciliation and 1st Eucharist

1. Parent(s) or guardian(s) must be registered members of the parish.
2. Children need to have been participating in religious education classes or attending St. John the Baptist Catholic School for at least one year prior to beginning sacramental preparation.
3. At least one parent or guardian must attend each family orientation meeting.
4. At least one parent or guardian must attend each Family Learning Center with their child.
5. If the child is to receive 1st Eucharist with the large group, at least one parent or guardian must attend the practice session with their child.
6. Parent(s) or guardian(s) must work with the child in the home workbooks and help the child to memorize the required prayers.
7. No sacraments will be forced upon or refused to those suitable prepared for them. If a parent or the pastor determines that a child is not ready, they will be invited again each year to celebrate the sacrament, and suitable preparation will be provided.

The reception of the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist are an important part of your child's initiation into the Catholic Church. They are beautiful expressions of faith, and not to be entered into routinely. Your involvement as a parent or guardian is of special importance in helping to prepare your child to receive these sacraments and in continuing your child's involvement in learning about their faith.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Community Confirmation Guidelines

1. A minimum of 1 full year of involvement in the SFA religious education program OR St. John the Baptist Catholic School prior to beginning immediate preparation for Confirmation.
2. Parents are to attend the parent/student information meeting. As primary educators in the work of forming their children's faith parents will be asked to attend 4 Confirmation Sessions with their child.
3. Personal desire on the part of the young person to be Confirmed, along with knowledge of the Catholic faith and a desire to live it, displayed in weekly mass attendance, service to others, and everyday living.

4. Attendance at all sessions. Any missed confirmation prep or high school ministry sessions will need to be made up.
5. Participation in one (1) service projects as planned by the Director of Youth Ministry. Candidates should also be active in parish life during this time.
6. Attendance at least two (2) Dead Theologians' Society meetings held on Monday nights from 7:30-9 pm from October-May.
7. Attendance at a retreat between the summer of 2017 and the summer of 2018.
8. Students are to ask someone to be their sponsor prior to November 1. A sponsor must be a confirmed, actively practicing Catholic, over 16 years of age, who is trying to live out their Catholic faith. A sponsor **may not** be the student's mother or father. When possible, the ideal would be to have the student's baptismal sponsor (Godparent) serve as sponsor again.
9. Sponsors (or a suitable stand-in) are to attend one designated catechetical session with their sponsored student, as well as the rehearsal.
10. Students will meet one on one for a brief interview with a member of the Confirmation Prep Team prior to Confirmation.

Sample form, to be completed when students bring a guest to class:

SJB GUEST/VISITOR REGISTRATION

DATE _____

NAME _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

HOME PHONE NUMBER _____

ATTENDING AS A GUEST OF (name and grade): _____

All adult volunteers working with minors are required to take a one-time, online course and submit to a background check/statement of agreement.

Go to <http://www.madisondiocese.org/virtus>

If you need assistance, or do not have access to the internet, contact Jodi El-Beri or Tiffany Topel at 674-5433 to register.